

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA
HELENA DIVISION

THOMAS SCOTT ANDERSON,

Plaintiff,

vs.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS, MIKE BATISTA,
Director of the Montana Department of
Corrections, LEROY KIRKEGARD,
Warden of the Montana State Prison,
and DR. KOHUT, individually and in
their official capacities,

Defendants.

CV-15-00031-H-DLC-JTJ

ORDER AND FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNITED
STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Plaintiff Thomas Anderson has filed a Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis (Doc. 1) and a proposed Complaint filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (Doc. 2). Mr. Anderson raises a denial of medical care claim regarding his Hepatitis C (Doc. 2). The request to proceed in forma pauperis will be granted. The Montana Department of Corrections should be dismissed based upon sovereign immunity pursuant to the Eleventh Amendment. All other Defendants will be required to respond to Mr. Anderson's allegations.

I. Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis

Mr. Anderson has filed a Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis and

submitted an account statement sufficient to make the showing required by 28 U.S.C. §1915(a). (Doc. 1.) The request to proceed in forma pauperis will be granted. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a).

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), Mr. Anderson must pay the statutory \$350.00 filing fee. Mr. Anderson has insufficient funds to pay an initial partial filing fee but will be required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to his institutional account. The percentage is set by statute and cannot be altered. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). By separate order, the Court will direct the agency having custody of Mr. Anderson to forward payments from Mr. Anderson's account to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10.00, until the filing fee is paid in full. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2).

II. Initial Screening Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§1915, 1915A

The Court has considered whether Mr. Anderson's Complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks solely monetary relief from a defendant who is immune. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A(b). It has also considered whether Mr. Anderson has a reasonable opportunity to prevail on the merits. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g). Dismissal is not appropriate at this time. Defendants Batista, Kirkegaard, and Kohut must respond to the Complaint.

The Montana Department of Corrections, however, is not a proper party in this action. The Eleventh Amendment bars suit in federal court against a state and/or state agencies absent a valid abrogation of immunity by Congress or an express waiver of immunity by the State. *See Idaho v. Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho*, 521 U.S. 261, 267–268 (1997); *Edelman v. Jordan*, 415 U.S. 651, 653 (1974); *Puerto Rico Aqueduct & Sewer Authority v. Metcalf & Eddy, Inc.*, 506 U.S. 139, 144 (1993). The State of Montana has waived immunity only for tort claims brought in state court. Mont. Code Ann. § 2-9-101 et seq. In addition, states, state agencies, and state officials sued officially are not “persons” subject to suit for money damages under Section 1983. *Will v. Michigan Dep’t of St. Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 65, 71 (1989).

The Montana Department of Corrections, as an agency of the State of Montana, has Eleventh Amendment immunity from suit in federal court, and it is not a “person” for purposes of 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Section 1983 claims against the Montana Department of Corrections should be dismissed.

The Eleventh Amendment does not bar suits for prospective declaratory or injunctive relief against state officials in their official capacity. *See Idaho v. Couer d'Alene Tribe*, 521 U.S. 261; *Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89, 102-106 (1984); *Doe v. Lawrence Livermore Nat'l Lab.*, 131 F.3d 836,

839 (9th Cir. 1997). Mr. Anderson's claims for injunctive relief will proceed against the individual Defendants named in their official capacities.

Based on the foregoing, the Court issues the following:

ORDER

1. Mr. Anderson's Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis (Doc. 1) is

GRANTED.

2. The Clerk shall remove the word "LODGED" from the docket entry for the Complaint. (Doc. 2). The Complaint is deemed filed on April 16, 2015.

3. Pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 4(d), the Court requests Defendants Batista, Kirkegard, and Kohut waive service of summons by executing, or having counsel execute, the Waiver of Service of Summons. The Waiver must be returned to the Court within **thirty (30) days of the entry date reflected on the Notice of Electronic Filing**. If Defendants choose to return the Waiver of Service of Summons, the answer or an appropriate motion will be due within 60 days after the entry date reflected on the Notice of Electronic Filing for this Order, pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 12(a)(1)(B). *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g)(2) (while Defendants may occasionally be permitted to "waive the right to reply to any action brought by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility under section 1983," once the Court has conducted its sua sponte screening pursuant to 28 U.S.C.

§ 1915(e)(2) and § 1915A(b), and thus, has made a preliminary determination based on the face on the pleading alone that plaintiff has a “reasonable opportunity to prevail on the merits,” Defendant is required to respond).

4. The Clerk of Court shall forward the documents listed below to:

Legal Counsel for the
Montana Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620-1301

- * Complaint (Doc. 2);
- * this Order;
- * a Notice of Lawsuit & Request to Waive Service of Summons; and
- * a Waiver of Service of Summons.

5. Any party’s request that the Court grant relief, make a ruling, or take an action of any kind must be made in the form of a motion, with an appropriate caption designating the name of the motion, served on all parties to the litigation, pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 7, 10, and 11. If a party wishes to give the Court information, such information must be presented in the form of a notice. The Court will not consider requests made or information presented in letter form.

6. Pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 5(a), all documents presented for the Court’s consideration must be simultaneously served by first-class mail upon the opposing party or their counsel if the party is represented. Each party shall sign and attach a

proper certificate of service to each document filed with the Court. The Certificate of Service must state the date on which the document was deposited in the mail and the name and address of the person to whom the document was sent. The sender must sign the certificate of service.

7. Mr. Anderson shall not make any motion for default until at least seventy (70) days after the date of this Order.

8. At all times during the pendency of this action, Mr. Anderson must immediately advise the Court and opposing counsel of any change of address and its effective date. Failure to file a notice of change of address may result in the dismissal of the action for failure to prosecute pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 41(b).

Further, the Court issues the following:

RECOMMENDATION

The Montana Department of Corrections should be **DISMISSED** pursuant to the Eleventh Amendment.

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO OBJECT TO FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO OBJECT

Mr. Anderson may file objections to these Findings and Recommendations within fourteen (14) days after service (mailing) hereof.¹ 28 U.S.C. § 636. Failure

¹As this deadline allows a party to act after the Findings and Recommendations is “served,” it falls under Fed.R.Civ.P. 6(d). Therefore, three

to timely file written objections may bar a de novo determination by the district judge and/or waive the right to appeal.

This order is not immediately appealable to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Any notice of appeal pursuant to Fed.R.App.P. 4(a) should not be filed until entry of the District Court's final judgment.

DATED this 12th day of May, 2015.

/s/ John Johnston
John Johnston
United States Magistrate Judge

(3) days are added after the period would otherwise expire.

NOTICE OF LAWSUIT AND REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF SERVICE OF SUMMONS

TO: Legal Counsel for the
Montana Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620-1301

A lawsuit has been commenced by a pro se plaintiff against Director Mike Batista, Warden Leroy Kirkegard, and Dr. Kohut. A copy the Complaint is attached to this notice. It has been filed in the United States District Court for the District of Montana, Civil Action No. CV-15-31-H-DLC-JTJ. The Court has completed its initial screening and concludes these Defendants must file a responsive pleading. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c), (g)(2); 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A(a), (b).

This is not a formal summons or notification from the Court, but rather a request that you sign and file the enclosed waiver of service in order to save the cost of service by the U.S. Marshal's Service. The cost of service will be avoided if you file the signed Waiver of Service of Summons within 30 days of the date the Order directing this Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons to be sent was entered as indicated on the Notice of Electronic Filing.

If you comply with this request and return the waiver to the Court, it will be filed with the Court and no summons will be served. The action will then proceed as if you had been served on the date the waiver is filed, except you must file an answer or appropriate motion within 60 days of the date the Order directing this Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons to be sent was entered as indicated on the Notice of Electronic Filing.

If you do not wish to waive service on behalf of Defendants, please indicate this on the Waiver of Service of Summons form. The Court will, in turn, order the U.S. Marshal's Service to serve the complaint personally on Defendants and may impose the full costs of such service.

/s/ John Johnston
John Johnston
United States Magistrate Judge

WAIVER OF SERVICE OF SUMMONS

TO: The U.S. District Court for the District of Montana

The following Defendants acknowledge receipt of your request to waive service of summons in the following action: *Anderson v. Batista, et al.*, Civil Action No. CV-15-31-H-DLC-JTJ filed in the United States District Court for the District of Montana. Defendants also received a copy of the Complaint. I am authorized by the following Defendants to agree to save the cost of service of a summons and an additional copy of the Complaint in this action by not requiring that the following individual be served with judicial process in the case provided by Fed.R.Civ.P. 4:

_____; _____;
_____; _____;
_____;

The above-named Defendants retain all defenses or objections to the lawsuits or to the jurisdiction or venue of the Court except for objections based on a defect in the summons or in the service of the summons. I understand judgments may be entered against the above-named Defendant if an answer or motion under Fed.R.Civ.P. 12 is not served within 60 days after the date the Order directing the Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons to be sent was entered as indicated on the Notice of Electronic Filing.

DATE

SIGNATURE

PRINTED/TYPED NAME

ADDRESS